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Socioeconomic Status and Violence

Keywords

Socioeconomic status, violence, income, education, women, white, African-American, Native-American

Description

The purpose of this brief is to provide information and main points regarding the issue of violence and socioeconomic status. It includes topics such as education and income and touches on the disparity of the rates between racial groups.

Key Points

1. Lower income groups experience a disproportionately higher rate of violence than higher income groups.
2. Women experiencing violence have lower odds of retaining full-time employment.
3. African-American women experience the highest rates of violence.

4. Higher educational attainment can positively affect socioeconomic status and reduce the incidents of violence.

Images



1 Courtesy of http://poundpuplegacy.org/child_abuse

2 Courtesy of <http://www.units.muohio.edu/psybersite/stereo/crime.shtml>

Issue Brief

Violence is known to occur in every level of socioeconomic status but the numbers can vary greatly from group to group. Violence has a negative effect on employment and education and the rates of violent occurrences are disproportionately higher for those on the lower end of the socioeconomic ladder. To help understand the type of violence that is being referred to in regards to the subject of socioeconomic status, it is important to give a clarification. Ian S.

Lustick provides a summarization where an event creates a “sudden and drastic increase” which results in a negative outcome for those who “experience this increase” (Lustick 6). The events of violence that can be linked to socioeconomic status may include physical and sexual violence, or the threat of violence. The American Psychological Association reports that women in households making under \$10,000 per year are four times more likely to experience violence than their wealthier counterparts and that low-income women working full time have 1/5th odds of retaining employment after six months when they’ve been victims of violence versus women who are not victims of violence (“Fact”). Callie Marie Rennison and Sarah Welchans report that the rates of partner violence against women are 20 per 1000 in households making less than \$7,500 per year versus 3 per 1000 for households making more than \$75,000 per year. The same report shows violence against men at a virtually unchanged rate, with 2 per 1000 in the households making less than \$7,500 per year compared to 1 per 1000 in households making more than \$75,000 per year. These statistics show that violence in the varying socioeconomic groups is far more often committed by men and the rates increase as the household income is lower.

Statistics also show that violence varies widely between different racial groups. Women in the African-American and Native American communities are more likely to be victims of violence in the United States. Rennison and Welchans say “Black females experienced intimate partner violence at a rate 35% higher than that of white females, and about 2 ½ times the rate of women of other races” (Rennison). A Chicago study by Robert Sampson, Jeffrey Morenoff, and Stephen Raudenbush says “The odds of perpetrating violence were 85% higher for blacks compared with whites, whereas Latino-perpetrated violence was 10% lower... The results imply

that generic interventions to improve neighborhood conditions and support families may reduce racial gaps in violence” (Sampson).

Education also plays a critical role in socioeconomic status and violence. The APA says “Abused and neglected children showed significantly lower levels of academic attainment in adulthood” (“Fact”). This in turn will generally result in lower incomes, increasing the likelihood that they will be victims or perpetrators of violence in the future. Another major concern in regards to socioeconomic status and violence are the rates of post traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. For example, the more difficult opportunities for veterans with PTSD to obtain employment means that there is a greater chance of violence. The APA says “Veterans with PTSD were 3 times more likely to be unemployed” (“Fact”).

In conclusion, while violence occurs throughout all levels of socioeconomic status, it is far more occurring among the poor communities and communities of color. It is critical to pay attention particularly to low income, educational attainment, and PTSD when discussing the issue of violence and socioeconomic status.

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National Center for PTSD

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National Institutes of Health

<<http://nih.gov/>>.

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